

On school letterhead

*SAMPLE LETTER to be sent home with **each** child **after** completing height, weight and Body Mass Index-for-age calculation*

School nurse should individualize each letter

Dear Parent:

Our school is participating in a program to identify students who may be at risk for developing certain health problems. We recently weighed and measured fifth grade students, and asked them about their usual eating and physical activity habits. All information is kept confidential. Your child's height () and weight () together mean that her/his Body Mass Index (BMI) is (). Body Mass Index is a measure that compares a child's growth to national norms for that age and gender. Based on these measurements, your child's BMI indicates she/he may be (underweight, normal weight, at-risk for overweight, overweight).

(Insert this paragraph if child is underweight)

Being underweight can put a child at risk for heart problems, decreased resistance to infection, chronic fatigue, anemia, osteoporosis, poor growth and development and various medical conditions. Eating disorders like anorexia nervosa and bulimia are on the rise in the United States with an increasing number of children and teens that restrict their dietary intake due to poor body image.

(Insert this paragraph if child is at-risk for overweight or overweight)

In the United States, Type 2 diabetes, a form of diabetes typically found only in adults, and heart disease have been increasing at an alarming rate in children. Experts believe that these increases are strongly linked to excess weight due to poor eating habits and an increasing lack of physical activity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 60% of children and teens with a BMI above the 95th percentile have at least one risk factor for developing heart disease.

Please do not put your child on a weight gain or weight loss diet without a physician's order. For information that will help you understand the meaning of a BMI measurement, see

www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/. To learn about healthy eating habits, study the Dietary Guidelines for Americans at www.usda.gov/cnpp/. For information that helps parents recognize and understand eating disorders see www.nationaleatingdisorders.org.

(Insert contact information for locally available resources, such as the local public health agency)

Cardiovascular heart disease and diabetes are the leading causes of death in Missouri adults, and are preventable. Education about good eating habits and the need for physical activity, beginning early in childhood, is an important method of preventing adult disease. We want our community's children to be healthy and active, so they will be healthy and productive adults. Please call if you have any questions.

School nurse contact information